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NSC BRIEFING

13 January 1960

IRAN

I. It's been about a month since I last described to you the situation in the Middle East and there are some interesting developments taking place. Of immediate concern are recent reports [REDACTED] who believe that Lt. General Teimur Bakhtiar, Chief of the Iranian intelligence agency, is actively plotting to seize power from the Shah in the near future. 25X1X6

A. [REDACTED] Bakhtiar may take action before the Iranian new year which begins on 21 March, or while the Shah is out of the country. He is planning several such visits in the next several months.

II. Bakhtiar has on two occasions during the past year indicated that he was concerned over what might happen in Iran should the Shah die or leave his throne for other reasons.

A. Information indicates that what Bakhtiar calls "contingency planning" is well-advanced and detailed, and he claims he has the support of key power elements of Tehran.

B. Bakhtiar states he favors a constitutional monarchy for Iran with the Shah's half-brother Gholam Reza as the most suitable successor.

C. Presumably, any takeover attempt by Bakhtiar would be made under the guise of protecting the state from anarchy.

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- III. We are still not sure that any move against the Shah is imminent. While the Shah has elaborate checks and safeguards aimed at protecting himself, Bakhtiar is in a good position to monitor and in part control information reaching the Shah and to provide plausible explanations for reports of his activities. He is also in a position to coordinate action among the conspirators when and if he decides to act.
- IV. We will continue to follow this situation carefully.

BIO INFO RE BAKHTIAR

- I. Lt. Gen. Bakhtiar, has been chief of National Information and Security Organization (Savak) since it was organized in 1957.
- A. At 45, he is one of the closest military officers to the Shah and, after the Shah, may be the most powerful man in Iran. Although not presently in command of troops he has the support of many officers in key positions.
- B. The Shah seems to be placing increasing trust in him. He is basically pro-West.
- II. Bakhtiar acquired a reputation for resourcefulness and ruthlessness which led to his rapid advancement from Captain to Brigadier General between 1945 and 1953.
- A. In 1945 he distinguished himself on a special mission against the Soviet-backed partisans in Azerbaijan Province.

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- B. Bakhtiar is remembered for speedily moving his troops to Tehran in 1953 to support the Shah during the disturbances surrounding the fall of Premier Mossadeq.
- C. As military governor of Tehran (late 1953-April 1957) he was credited with a successful campaign against the Communist Tudeh network, especially within the officer corps.
- D. In his present position Bakhtiar has been careful not to antagonize politically significant elements in Iran.

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